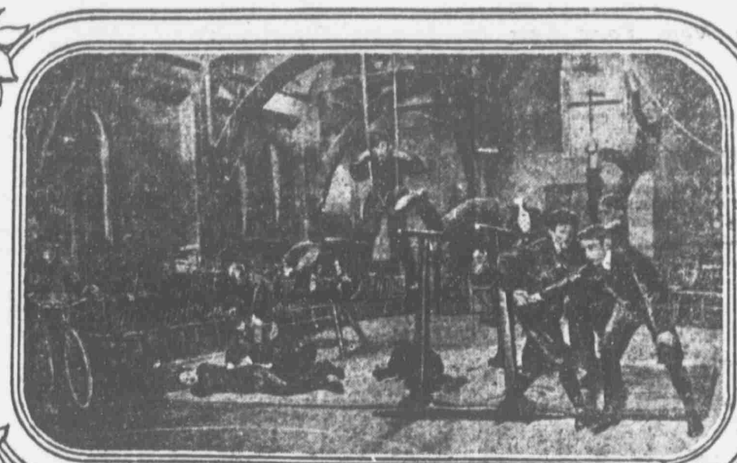
TRAINING THE CHOIR BOYS OF CALVARY CHURCH

A System That Calls for a Gymnasium as Well as a Piano

READY FOR THE PROCESSIONAL.



THREE MINUTES FOR JITSU.

"Give me the right sort of boys and I will make the voices," said Lacey Baker, organist-choirmaster of Calvary Church, whose boys sang in "Parsifal" at the Metropolitan Opera House. "If a boy has the larynx of an angel and has not an alert intelligence he can never sing; but, having the mind, if he is properly trained, the voice will come.

"This is not to say that all voices are equally good, but rather that the voice, per se, is not of paramount importance, while the intelligence, and that which is perhaps deeper than intelligence, is all important."

As a further qualification Mr. Baker says that light complexioned boys make the best singers. When asked if he had any theory as to why this is so, Mr. Baker said that he had not, but that his observation had convinced him of the fact. Among the fifty boys in his choir there are not more than half a dozen who have dark hair.

It is also insisted by Mr. Baker that it is only when a boy is happy and at ease that he is in good form for singing. That explains the unusual methods Mr. Baker uses in training choir boys—methods whose purpose is largely to establish pleasant relations between master and pupils. Thus when he sees the muscles of a boy's face and brow contract he at once calls:

"Easy there, Tom; a frown does not help, but hinders."

To insure perfect relaxation, together with vital energy in the boys, Mr. Baker conceived an arrangement which makes possible quick and easy interchange of intellectual effort and physical exercise during his rehearsals. There are many boy choirs that have a gymnasium at their disposal for a certain length of time, but the rehearsing is entirely apart from it. Mr. Baker is solitary in combining the two.

With a grand piano at one end of the room and a complete gymnasium outfit at the other, Mr. Baker devotes an hour and a half each day to providing the right kind of boys with voices, and also equipping them with a thorough knowledge of music and incidentally other things that every boy should know.

EASTER SUNDAY MORNING, CALVARY CHURCH

SOLO BOY ON DUTY.

LACEY BAKER.

SOLO BOY OFF DUTY.

EASTER MONDAY NIGHT, MENDELSSOHN CLUB.

Not with the same regularity, but as easily as a pendulum swings forward and back, the boys go from their seats about the piano to the gymnasium and return many times during a rehearsal. When they have been giving undivided attention for some time to rendering a difficult passage in just the right way; if they show by manner or voice the fatigue which makes constructive thinking, if not impossible, very difficult; if there is the slightest tendency to restiveness, they are swung into the gymnasium part of the room by a "Now take to the woods, boys," from Mr. Baker.

With a rush, but without unseemly boisterousness, they make for the different parts of the gymnasium. A knot of them gathers four or five deep on the rings, each boy clinging to the one above him and thus they gaily g rate. Others double the bars and so on. Not a boy fails to continue to exercise until a note on the piano recalls them to their work.

The rehearsals are held every day but Sunday. It is understood that all members of the choir shall be present at three rehearsals each week, but a boy may suit himself as to the days. In this particular, as in all connected with the choir work, the convenience, nay, pleasure, of each boy is considered.

This attitude of the choirmaster is the evident source of his exceptional success, not alone in inciting boys to self-restraint and a due consideration of the rights of those about them, but in awakening a sense of personal responsibility as to the thing they have in hand. By the work, which he makes a pleasure, and the change of work, which is rest, Mr. Baker keeps the volition of his boys so directed that they constantly endeavor to gain and maintain a high standard of excellence, not because it is his desire that they should, but for the reason that they themselves desire it.

There are absolutely no rules, no laws to be broken in this choir, and consequently no fines and no punishments. Each boy is a law unto himself. If something is broken Mr. Baker simply says:

"I've done the same thing myself. It cannot be helped now, but we will try not to have it occur again."

When a new boy comes into the choir he says:

"So long as you are comfortable and happy, stay; when you are not, go."

Last winter during a blizzard a boy who lives at 190th street in order to attend a rehearsal which seemed to him important, started shortly after 12 o'clock and was four hours getting to Calvary Church. That is an illustration of the zeal the boys show in their work.

While there are no hard and fast rules, the most painstaking and exact work is done. When the boys are singing together if there is a voice not quite true, that lags, is in any way discordant, if the boy does not at once criticize himself, which he is expected to do, Mr. Baker inquires what the trouble is and is promptly informed.

It is usual for a boy when he has made an error to raise his hand and state his mistake. When he does not he practically acknowledges a double dereliction, as it is counted that he is lacking in musical judgment and attention or is inclined to shirk his responsibilities.

Nothing is allowed to pass unchallenged, and such is the standard that these boys sing acceptably with accomplished musicians. Not long ago the Mendelssohn Club invited the Calvary choir boys to do some work with them. A number was proposed which the boys had not seen before. They read it with ease, and to the surprise of the men sang it with them satisfactorily.

Under these circumstances Mr. Baker's praise is highly regarded. Thus during the rehearsal of a difficult piece the other day he turned to a fair, bright faced boy, one of the seniors from among whom the soloists are selected, and asked that he sing the passage for them. When the little fellow, whose voice is like a perfectly tuned silver bell, had rendered it most beautifully Mr. Baker said, smiling:

"Will you remind me, Lincoln, to raise your salary?" It is safe to say the commendation this banter implied was as gratifying, in a way, as a veritable raise of salary would have been, for there is not a boy of the fifty that make up this choir who does not prize the leader's praise.

The use of the blackboard in training choir boys is common, but to use it to illustrate mistakes is not usual. Mr. Baker is very particular as to enunciation, and a thorough believer in a natural tone and cleancut wording. When the boys were rehearsing for Easter, as they finished singing Mr. Baker wrote the following line on the blackboard: "This is the day the Lord has risen, we will rejoice and be glad in nit," assuring them that they had sung the last word just as they saw it. It is not necessary for him to repeat a criticism made in this way.

In speaking of his work, Mr. Baker says he has never yet found a boy who was incorrigible. When in Philadelphia he made up a choir from the slums and had no trouble with the boys. He is often surprised when mothers come to him to ask how their boys are getting on, and assure him that they have serious trouble with them at home and in school. With him their conduct has left nothing to desire.

Mr. Baker showed himself a master of diplomacy long before he began training choir boys in New York. While he was in Rome he met Abbé Liszt, and Liszt declined absolutely to play for societies. The Artists' Club of Rome was very anxious to have him play at one of its meetings, and to Mr. Baker was given the difficult task of getting the master to the meeting and inducing him to play.

After much urging and with the distinct understanding that he was not to be asked to play, Liszt consented to be present. After a time, Mr. Baker seated himself at the piano and began playing, very badly, one of Liszt's rhapsodies. At last, in addition to bad rendering he ventured interpolations of his own. This was too much for the composer and, rushing to the piano, he thrust Mr. Baker aside and played the rhapsody as only he could play it. Mr. Baker had accomplished his purpose, but the relations between himself and Liszt were ever after a little strained.

OTHER SIDE OF THE BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

Does Not Always Help the Object for Which It Is Given—Is Profitable to Some Agents, Managers and Promoters.

The theatrical season which has just come to an end was richer in benefits for various purposes than any that preceded it. Whether the beneficiaries of these performances were always enriched is another question. In some cases they received amounts so small as to be out of all proportion to the expense involved. To make an outlay of from $5,000 to $6,000 in order to earn only $600 or $700 would never be considered good business by any but a benefit committee.

The organizer of benefits as a business proposition has never met with much success here. He thrives best in the small cities.

The method of this person, who is usually feminine, is to write to some institution on a chance, asking if it would not like to have a benefit. For a small certainty and a share of the profits this benevolent impresario will organize an entertainment. The financial conditions differ under various circumstances, but the organizer stands to earn something, whatever happens to the beneficiary.

The entertainment may be a series of tableaus representing national heroes, or it may be a fairy spectacle. The organizer provides nothing but the training of the performers and the other details of the production.

One of these women lately applied to a well known institution in town and offered to put on a version of "Little Red Riding Hood," which she said was certain to be most beautiful and to draw all New York to see it.

"All I shall ask of you," she said, "will be the assurance of a hundred children who shall come to rehearsal every day for a month. They will not have to be there more than two hours and the work will be very easy. The costumes can be hired and the scenery will not cost much. I will train the children and teach them the songs. All you will have to do will be to send the children."

That "all" was, of course, difficult enough in New York. Children of fashionable families here do not take part in amateur performances, nor are they allowed to mingle promiscuously with other children.

But the task of the patronesses involved even more than s pplying the children. They had to beg a manager for a theater, sell all the tickets, importune other women to act as patronesses and see that the affair the proper publicity. This is the real work of getting up a benefit.

Women work themselves into nervous prostration over these details and are often put into the disagreeable position of having to ask favors of women they would not otherwise have anything to do with.

Then after they have worked for weeks their labors might seem worth while if there were a substantial sum earned for the charity. But in nine cases out of ten there is no profit. Expenses mount up to an extent that the good ladies of the committee never dream of beforehand. Then the tickets do not go as one would expect.

The organizer has to have her certainty, and the charity is lucky if it gets a few hundred dollars and does not face a deficit. In one case this winter the women in charge of a children's home had to go to work to get up a second benefit to pay their losses on the first. The loss on a large scheme of this kind at the Metropolitan Opera House several years ago mounted up into the thousands.

Some benefits of course make money, and in some cases the gain is substantial. At an open air performance two years ago more than $10,000 was the result for the charity, and a concert given during that same winter for a blind asylum yielded more than $8,000.

But in both cases the artists who appeared received no compensation and the women in charge had long lists of wealthy and influential names back of them. And they labored heroically in advance.

It usually happens that this preliminary work falls on the shoulders of one or two of the committee. The trouble is worth while, however, when there is any such profit as in the case of these two benefits.

Some performances given for charity net the agents and managers of the artists much more than the institution for which they are given. One concert given during the past winter is said to be a wonderful example of this kind.

The two artists who appeared received twice as much as they usually get for a concert appearance. This money did not of course go to them. More than $1,700 went to their managers and agents and this sum was more than the charity received in spite of the trouble and expense to which all the women of the committee were put.

They had to pay for the hire of a hall, elaborate advertising, additional musicians and the numerous expenses that surround such an entertainment. And all the trouble and outlay of money did more to enrich the managers and agents than it accomplished for the charity.

In the case of another recent concert the result was about the same. The two artists who appeared got much more than they customarily receive—at least their manager did.

He got for one singer two and a half times as much as he ordinarily receives and for the prima donna half as much again as her usual fee. He made in this way $2,000, while the charity, in spite of all the risk and outlay and worry of getting rid of the tickets, did not receive nearly as much. But the lady who got up the performance had the pleasure of coming into contact with the singers, and her pet charity may have benefited.

Many women in New York are called upon so often to act as patronesses at charity benefits that they have made it a fixed rule under no circumstances to figure in that capacity, and they break the rule for nobody. They rarely have occasion to regret this determination. If the women invited to be patronesses are ambitious for social recognition they find this an easy way to acquire it. Such women are always counted on as liberal givers to charity affairs and are appealed to first.

One instance of the kind of traps laid for them is the method adopted recently by a committee of women who wanted their benefit to be a financial success above everything else. They took half the boxes in the first tier of the ballroom at the Waldorf and offered them to the smartest women they knew. In every case the box was sent to a friend by one of the women on the committee and was intended to be a gift from her.

Most of the women accepted. Then the list of these boxholders was sent around to all the persons with whom it was thought they would have influence. The result was that most of the boxes were sold to women who wanted to be included in such a list.

Theater managers have grown very loath to give the use of their theaters to charities because so many benefits have proved to be failures and not worth the time and trouble taken in them. Managers will now rarely allow their actors to take part in these performances, even when they are paid.

Mr. Conreid always charges now for the Metropolitan, and did so in the case of the Holland and Modjeska testimonials. He never allows his singers to appear for compensation without his permission, although sometimes they are able to appear without compensation if that does not interfere with their work at the opera.

The prima donnas all make their own rules in the matter of benefit appearances. Mme. Sembrich, if she sings for charity, does it for nothing or not at all. With the arrangements that Mr. Conreid may make for her services at concerts she has nothing to do.

Mme. Eames, if she is asked to sing, always makes it a rule to say that she will be happy to do so if the lady who asks her will agree to give to the charity an amount equal at what Mme. Eames would receive if she were paid. It is not necessary to say that this condition is rarely complied with. Mme. Nordica is usually willing to accept whatever a charity is able to pay her in case it is impossible to give her all that she is accustomed to receive. Mme. Sembrich organized a concert for the Home for the Blind two winters ago, in which all the artists were Poles, Edouard de Reszke and Timothee Adamowski both giving their services. The receipts were nearly $9,000.

There are still benefits that yield a real profit to their promoters and do not involve so much trouble and expense. These are the ones on which very little is expended, for the artists who take part and all the expenses are kept down to a small figure. The benefit may not be so brilliant, but it serves its purpose better than the others.

"Nobody knows the inside history of these benefits," said the proprietor of an entertainment bureau to a SUN reporter, "and how few of them ever make any money. Most of the women who get them up keep silent after the performance rather than let it be known how little they really take in and how much of that goes toward paying the expenses of the affair.

"It is possible for any charity with a large following to give a benefit at any time that will make money if the affair is properly managed. To make several thousand dollars, it is necessary to put up a much more elaborate bill than if the promoters will be satisfied with $1,000 or $1,200.

"All money spent in hanging out posters in hotels and shops to attract the outside public is wasted. It does no harm of course to advertise the benefit, but it does not draw a cent.

"In the same way it is not important to have the very first artists. They may help doubtful purchasers to buy seats. But they will not help to bring in the people not interested in the charity.

"The tickets must be sold by the patronesses to their friends. It is of course, pleasanter for them to be able to say that they are going to have such and such a singer or prima donna; but it will not much effect the sale of tickets if the patronesses are diligent and do their work conscientiously.

"There is one society which gives an entertainment every year. The patronesses sell the tickets and fill the theater. The entertainment costs less than $200. They don't have Maude Adams or Mrs. Fiske or Sembrich or Caruso. But they get rid of the tickets and they have never cleared less than $1,000 at any of their matinées, and in some cases the profits have run up to $1,500.

"There is, of course, no especial brilliancy about the program. But the money comes in and goes to the charity, not to the managers and agents."

"THE WILD MEN OF SOMERSET:" A MAINE COLONY OF PAUPERS AND IDIOTS

BANGOR, Me., May 6.—The hard cider murder, as the killing of William Knights at West Athens last month is called, has again brought to public notice the colony of paupers and idiots long known in Maine as "the Somerset wild men," and it is probable that an effort will be made to disperse these unfortunates and provide for them in almshouses or other institutions, where they may be comfortably cared for and kept under control.

In a barren region of West Athens, Somerset county, are gathered some scores of wretched mortals—paupers and descendants of paupers from several towns of the vicinity, who make a pitiful attempt at farming, and are kept from starvation only by assistance from the poor funds of the towns where they belong. The present population is composed almost entirely of two families—the Browns and the Tuttles, whose members have intermarried for generations, with the result of producing monsters and idiots, some harmless and some as dangerous as wild beasts.

These are the facts of the "hard cider murder." Rufus Brown, Jr., aged 20, killed William Knights of Bingham, and has since been arrested and has confessed the crime. According to Brown's story, Knights visited the home of the Browns, where, with others, he was entertained with hard cider and other refreshments.

Brown became jealous of Knights. He got a loaded shotgun, and fired both barrels at Knights and Mrs. Brown, neither of whom was wounded. Brown then ordered Knights from the premises, and, as Knights went through the door, struck him upon the head with the stock of the gun, killing him instantly. Knights was 59 years old, and leaves a wife and six grown children.

The oldest member of the colony is Jed Brown, who is 95. He was born a pauper on the farm where he now lives, and his son, young Jed, and young Jed's children are paupers.

The people are not vicious except at long intervals. Ordinarily they are tractable and inoffensive, but their temper when molested or annoyed is furious.

The court records show that in the past they have troubled the farmers considerably by petty thieving, coming down from the hills and mountains above Brighton, like the Scottish highlanders, to raid the country. They know what the law is, but haven't the strength of mind to resist a good fat sheep or tempting farm product.

Abe Brown is the most picturesque of them all. He is about 50 years old, is black, hairy and has been foolish from birth. He is unable to talk, his vocabulary being confined to a few guttural sounds, but he can yell like a wildcat. He has gigantic strength and has been used as a beast of burden for many years.

He has frequently been seen pulling ahead of oxen on a breaking up plow, getting an occasional jab with the goad. He has hauled flour and groceries from Brighton and Athens for years, and frequently in winter drags the women of the family down to the village of Brighton, five miles away, on a sled.

He used to amuse the children in the village by prancing and kicking like a horse. At one time he got it into his head that he must be tied every time that he went to the village, to prevent his running away, and while the woman he brought to town was trading in the store he would gnaw the hitching post outside like a horse.

He will obey commands implicitly, and mischievous people have frequently set the poor chap to tasks which have caused serious results to himself and other people. If any one, no matter who, has told him to take an article, Abe has picked it up and religiously lugged it home to his mother. He is as easily influenced to deeds of violence.

Some years ago the authorities of the town of Corneville thought it would be better to support the Browns on the Corneville town farm than in Brighton, and so they sent up officers to compel the exodus of the whole family. The order caused a mighty uproar.

Old and young were panic-stricken. Some of the family informed Abe by signs of what was going on and he fell to blubbering like a great baby, but suddenly one of the women put an ax in his hands, punched him and shouted:

"Mow 'em, Abe."

Instantly Abe was transformed into a maniac giant. With fire in his eyes he dashed upon the officers and would have worked havoc had not some one shot him in the leg. Since then he has had a mortal fear of a gun and will run like a deer if any one makes believe to take aim at him.

The women of the Brown family are not exactly of the clinging variety. When a deputy sheriff of Athens a few years ago went up to the Tuttle borough after some cattle, Mary Tuttle blazed away at him with buckshot and was only driven out of the field by the grit of the officer, who secured the cattle and drove them away before him.

It is a dismal region where these wretches exist. Once there were good farms there, but in many places the soil has become rusty and thin. Several farms have been abandoned. Others are occupied by the shiftless people, who care only for bare existence.

For four miles along the highway leading toward old Jed Brown's there are numerous families, but every one is supported wholly or in part by some town in which the people have gained a residence. It is as though the region were a land of exile for the paupers. Some of the men are ablebodied and strong, but they lack the faculty of making a living for themselves.

The people have been driven back to the outskirts of civilization, beyond the reach of good influences and with the curse of heridity to haunt them and their children. They work on their farms, but whatever stock or crops they produce is sure to be gobbled up by some one with whom they trade, and when winter comes on they are destitute. They are invariably worsted in a dicker but they can't resist the temptation to swap.

What to do with the wild men of Somerset is one of the greatest social problems in Maine to-day. No one seems much interested in its solution, although every year the Christian people of the State contribute liberally to funds for the benefit of heathen in distant lands.

FIRST SERIES OF PHILIPPINE STAMPS

To Be Used on July 4 Next—American and Filipino Patriots to Figure on Them.

WASHINGTON, May 6.—The gift of a new kind of money from Uncle Sam furnished the Filipinos with substantial grounds for a grand celebration last 4th of July. This 4th of July the Filipinos will have another cause for jubilation.

On that day they will be supplied with a new and distinctive series of postage stamps of all denominations. This will mark an epoch in the history of the islands. They will be the first real Filipino postage stamps ever used.

For sentimental reasons this new issue of Philippine stamps will possess great interest for the people of the United States, although they will not be available for postage here any more than are Cuban stamps. Upon six of the denominations will appear portraits of distinguished citizens of the United States.

The four centavo, corresponding to our two cent stamp, will bear the photograph of William McKinley. This will be the first time the face of President McKinley has had a place on a postage stamp.

At the time of his death the Post Office Department had under consideration a new series of stamps, and immediately there developed a strong sentiment in favor of honoring Mr. McKinley with a place on one of the denominations. This could not be done without displacing Washington, Franklin, Lincoln or Grant, provided McKinley was to have a place on a stamp of general use.

In view of the fact that Franklin's portrait had appeared on our stamp of lowest value from the time of the issue of our first stamps, and Washington had always occupied a similar position on the stamp carrying domestic letter mail, it was decided not to disturb them. Then there was serious discussion of the proposition to issue a mourning stamp bearing the head of McKinley, but this was also abandoned.

Now McKinley's face will appear on a postage stamp, and it will adorn the stamps used by the people liberated from the yoke of Spain during his Administration.

The new series of stamps for the Philippines will consist of the same number and denominations—expressed in centavos—as the current issue of United States stamps. The designs will be as follows:

Two centavos (1 cent)—Bust of Rizal, the idol of the Filipinos, who was executed by the Spaniards because of his activity in fighting for his country's freedom. This stamp will carry the bulk of Philippine domestic mail.

Four centavos—Bust of McKinley.

Six centavos—Bust of Magellan, discoverer of the Philippines.

Eight centavos—Bust of Legaspi, who first established civil government in the Philippines.

Ten centavos—Bust of Gen. Lawton, killed in the Philippines.

Twelve centavos—Bust of Abraham Lincoln.

Sixteen centavos—Bust of Admiral Sampson.

Twenty centavos—Bust of George Washington.

Twenty-six centavos—Bust of Carriedo, the Spanish philanthropist, whose benefactions provided Manila with its first water supply.

Thirty centavos—Bust of Benjamin Franklin.

One, two, four and ten pesos bear the coat of arms of the Filipinos, having no portraits.

Special delivery stamp—Figure of a Filipino messenger boy at one end of the stamp; the famous Mount Mayon at the other end.

The question naturally arises, Why should Admiral Sampson be honored by a place on the stamps rather than Admiral Dewey? The explanation is simple.

The policy of the Government does not permit the placing of portraits of persons still living upon postage stamps. The scheme of the Insular Bureau contemplated representation on the series of stamps of American officers who participated in the land and sea operations which resulted in the acquisition of the Philippines, and Admiral Sampson was the only commanding officer of high grade not now living.

The placing of Franklin and Washington on the stamps of the Philippines is also a bit of sentiment. The first two postage stamps ever issued by the United States Government were the five cent face of Franklin and the ten cent face of Washington in 1847. Since that date these two faces have appeared on every series of postage stamps issued, and it is fitting that the should now be continued on the stamps of the colonies.

Postage stamps have been in use in the Philippines since 1854. They were Spanish stamps until the United States took charge in 1898, since which time the United States stamps with the word "Philippines" printed diagonally across the face of the stamp have been used.

From 1854 until 1890 the stamps bore the portraits of Queen Isabella and King Alfonso XII., followed by the face of the four-year-old King Alfonso XIII. These were known as the baby head stamps, and this design continued on all Spanish and colonial stamps until 1898, when the portrait of the young King, then 12 years of age, appeared. These stamps had just gone into circulation in the Philippines when the United States took possession of the archipelago.

When the design for the Philippine coins was under consideration a year ago the sketch submitted by a native Filipino was accepted, and in the selection and preparation of the designs for the new Philippine stamps influential Filipinos were consulted and their suggestions approved.

While the stamps will be distinctively Filipino in a way, Uncle Sam will still indicate his interest in the postal system of his ward by the use of an inscription in small letters at the top of each stamp, substantially as follows: "Government of the Philippines, U. S. A.," and although the Spanish currency will be the basis—centavos and pesos—the English language will be applied as for example, "two centavos," rather than "dos centavos."

The Filipino stamp of the denomination of one milesima is worth in our currency only one-twentieth of a cent. Grading upward from one milesima there are five intermediate denominations before the value of two centavos, the equivalent of our one cent is reached.

But this stamp, small in value as it is, does not hold the record. In 1873, for a special purpose, a stamp was issued worth less than one-thirtieth of a cent. In an unused condition it is now a very rare stamp and collectors will pay $5 each for copies, and it is worth $3 after having been used.

The stamps of the United States surcharged "Philippines" have all been of the watermarked variety. In 1898 a few sheets of the 50 cent value were by mistake surcharged "Philippines" on the unwatermarked paper still remaining in the vault of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. These stamps sell to collectors for $2.50 each.

The early stamps of the Philippines are very rare and worth to collectors from $15 to $65 each for stamps intrinsically of the value of two and a half cents.